

Message Text

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51

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-15 TRSE-00 MBFR-03

SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 MC-02 ACDA-19 COME-00 CAB-09

FAA-00 OPIC-12 RSR-01 /159 W
----- 036636

R 081521Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8378

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BONN

USCINCEUR/ECJ7

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

DIA

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PASS COMMERCE

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ETRD, MASS, BE

SUBJECT: PENDING BELGIAN PURCHASE OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT

REF: BRUSSELS 4437

1. BRUSSELS' SATIRICAL WEEKLY "PAN" SUGGESTED IN AUGUST 1
EDITION THAT NEGOTIATION WITH NATO FOR CHANGE TO PURELY GROUND
SUPPORT ROLE FOR BELGIAN AIR FORCE COULD PAVE WAY FOR LARGE
PURCHASE OF FRANCO-GERMAN ALPHA-JETS TO REPLACE CURRENT
INVENTORY OF T-33'S, F-104'S AND FOUGAS, THUS AVOIDING NEED
TO PURCHASE MORE COSTLY NORTHROP COBRAS OR MIRAGE F-ONE'S.

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ACCORDING TO "PAN", ORDER FOR 100 ALPHA-JETS COULD RESULT

IN REDUCTION OF PURCHASE PRICE PER AIRCRAFT AS WELL AS OF
OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS WHILE CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT
OF EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY. SUGGESTION WAS MADE IN CONTEXT
OF CRITICAL COMMENT CONCERNING EUROPEAN AIRLINE PREFERENCE
FOR AMERICAN COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT AND BLOW THAT RECENT
SABENA PURCHASE OF BOEING-737'S HAD BEEN TO IDEA OF EUROPEAN
AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY.

2. "PAN" SOMETIMES REFLECTS THINKING OF HIGH-LEVEL BELGIAN
OFFICIALS AND WE ARE PURSUING THE MATTER TO SEE WHETHER THERE
IS FOUNDATION FOR THIS REPORT. IT DOES IN ANY EVENT INDICATE
INTEREST IN SOME BELGIAN QUARTERS IN DUTCH IDEA OF SPECIALIZATION
OF MILITARY ROLES AS WAY TO ACHIEVE ECONOMY IN DEFENSE.
BOOCHEVER

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